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Dufours Place 9th Oct. 1813

My dear little Jamsine – Friend by Choice, & Sister by adoption,

There's a whole line of Epithets adjunct to your name & you are therefore at liberty to accept & reject which you choose except the "little" which I defy you to get rid of – And so, I may answer you "written a twelvemonth" I see your daft, Miss – You dont wish to hear from me 'till then & so out of the very spirit of opposition I sit down to have it out with you immediately. You have been leading a very gadabout kind of life since last I wrote to or heard from you & I dare say have been in the enjoyment of every species of pleasure that your age, your disposition, a mind free from care & ~~a disp~~ circumstances from embarrasment can give you a relish for & in the midst of all this how often my dear Jamsine have you bestowed a thought upon your absent friend whose age or rather whose youth is withered by sickness, whose disposition is soured by disappointment & whose mind is harrassed by numberless unforward circumstances – Look on this picture, & compare it with the one my life presented when I dwelt among you happy in myself & blest in all around me –

"Could I on that fair pasture cease to feed, & batten on this moor"

I hardly ever sit down to write to any of You but this comparison rushes so obtrusively upon my mind that it is some time before I can disentangle myself from the train of thought it engenders & feel convinced that I make it the troublesome subject of too many of my letters – How shall I get out of it. ——

I'll tell you what is the only comfortable part of my present existence It is when the Evening closes in & we "stir the fire & wheel the sofa round & draw the curtains close" when "we retire the world shut out" Then it is that be Bailey Reynolds & myself in all the luxury of mental relaxation indulge our fancies our feelings & our humours, & without any of the prescriptions of form, ramble over the fields of imagination running after every butterfly & subject that starts up before us – You will of course suppose that he is no Stranger to our delightful & dear Sisterhood of Slade – but do not therefore for a moment think that we profane your names to those to whom you ought to be Strangers or in whose actual acquaintance we are not confident you would be pleased – We have always some project on the

carpet, some game ever afoot — Either Reynolds or Bailey have ever got the Muses Spirit in their side that will not allow them rest or respite — every sad things their productions may be for ought I know but they give us pleasure & make us every now & then cry "excellent" & that serves our turn you know as well as if they were better. Reynolds has made progress in a Tragidy that according to my own judgment (if it be not partializ'd) bids fair to stamp his name with very current reputation — by their Wits meet too we have bethought of us turning that delightful little tale of Louisa Venoni into an Opera for which it has ever seemed to me wonderably suited — I have bargained to furnish the plot & some of the humour & Reynolds the serious & sentimental — or as a Satirist would quiz it, he is to be the Quack & I the merry Andrew of the Piece — no matter if these our Plans never come to any thing or change once a month like the Moon, like her too they serve to enliven our Nights whilst they do last. — Here is a Song I fabricated the other night to be sung if possible to a varied air, rather inclining to plaintive, perhaps you could fit it with an appropriate tune Doantee go to laugh now at our foolish vanities & vain follies. —

Song — Louisa

When I breathed the keen air of my own native Mountains
And drank the glad waters that shone in their fountains,
When my eyes chaskly bright
Like yon Planet of Night
In their lustre reflected a heart-borrowed light;
Oh those were the days when the pride of my soul
Scorned the fetters of Art, Knew no curb of Control,
When each thought unconfined
Left no canker behind,
But a health breathing spirit played over my mind
Fresh as Morning's first breeze o'er the grey mountains brow,
Bright & pure as the stream that runs sparkling below.

Wednesday Evening Sept. 11th

Oh my goodness gracious I exclaimed on drawing this letter from the depths of my pocket, see what a pickle Tamsines letter is in, now you must know that I have kept this same letter in the said durance vile ever since Monday morning with the intention of giving it the airing by intervals & so from time to time renewing the pleasure of gossiping with you at such snatches as might be allowed me from what in these latitudes are called more important occupations (well well!) the hours for these occupations have at length passed away for this day at least, & I am left to the enjoyment of my evening meditations — as all pleasures are but comparative, & is enjoyment, thought not of that very very heartsatisfying kind that used to play thro' every pulse in the happier days of our general assembling round the fireside of Wade — Bailey & I have warmed toes on the same fender every Evening since I commenced this, we are now comfortably seated vis a vis at the same table. Sowing the seeds of this letter whose fruit whether sweet or sour you are to reap, & Bailey seems to have got a good nights work before him — There is a letter half written to Sarah imploring his heart & hand to come to its completion on the one side, & you know that the halves of his epistles are not the works of moments At the present moment he is engaged with all the enthusiasm of his heart & all the energy of his mind in writing a short essay by way of preface to that beautiful speech of Mr. Phillips that is about to be published by a friend of his, he is now in the very glow of his subject & I have no doubt will raise a Pedestal worthy of the divine statue that is to be placed upon it. — The speech itself is a Masterpiece of Eloquence, a brilliant epitome of all that is warm in feeling, bright in fancy, or powerful in argument, & what is most excellent is, that this charm of sentiment & magic of expression only springs to lend attraction to the dictates of reason, to give grace & to the suggestions of morality — It is a flame that at the same time sheds a beaming lustre round the brow of Virtue & throws a scorching heat into the heart of Vice. — But I must have done with this my good Sister for you have had enough of steady grave Prose from Bailey & it is for me as indeed it most suits me to saunter along the pathway of my lines with a sort of easy slip shod gossiping & I like to appear before the my friends in the same style of dress that I used to come down in at Slade of a morning slippered & loose at the legs — at the legs only I hope

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